

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A1-6

THE WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
31 January 1980

Pravda Tells U.S. to Accept Diminished Role in World

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In a stiff lecture, the Kremlin has warned the United States to accept the facts of waning U.S. power and growing Soviet might.

The United States can no longer think in terms of the clear, worldwide military dominance it enjoyed a quarter-century ago, according to the Soviet Communist Party newspaper, Pravda.

Instead, Pravda said in an editorial, that the Soviet Union can exercise its power to block U.S. moves and to accomplish its own purposes.

The editorial, published in Moscow Tuesday, suggested that the Soviet Union intends to abide by the new Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, despite the indefinite postponement of the U.S. Senate's ratification debate.

The strongly worded editorial focused on President Carter's State of the Union speech last week. In that speech, the president, while taking a hard line against recent Soviet actions in Afghanistan and elsewhere, said that "observing the mutual constraints imposed by the terms of these (SALT I and II) treaties will be in the best interest of both countries. . . ."

Noting that Carter does not intend to go ahead with ratification of SALT II at this time, the editorial said:

"The Soviet Union, of course, is for ratification of the SALT II treaty. It is always true to its word and believes that the other side must abide by the documents it signed."

There was some disagreement among officials here whether this meant that the Kremlin would abide by the terms of an unratified treaty or was simply criticizing Carter for failing to press for Senate ratification of the treaties now.

In any event, the U.S. position is that Soviet compliance is monitored by U.S. intelligence, so this country is not dependent on what Moscow says about its adherence to treaty terms.

The editorial stated in harsher words a theme that has been featured in the Soviet press in recent

months. Soviet media have been talking about "the shifting correlation of forces," meaning that the Soviet Union is militarily stronger than the United States.

In private comments during the month since the invasion of Afghanistan, Soviet officials have taken a much more defiant stand than simply talking of the correlation of forces. Some have bluntly said to foreigners that the United States no longer has the power to control what the Soviet Union decides to do.

The editorial appeared in Pravda as a carefully worded public statement of this attitude on the same day that Defense Secretary Harold Brown was reporting to Congress on the military balance.

The Pravda editorial used the usual Soviet code words to describe Kremlin supporters as the forces of peace and progress, while the United States government is described as imperialist.

Carter's message meant, Pravda said, that American "ruling circles, having encountered the realities of the present-day world and the objective growth of the forces of peace, progress, and socialism, obviously are unwilling to make their policy in keeping with the United States' real weight in the present-day world.

"They apparently are unable to get rid of the imperial, hegemonistic mentality and do not want to reckon with the established alignment of forces in the international arena, are unwilling to see that mankind has entered the '80s of the 20th century and that nowadays one cannot speak the cold-war language and think in Truman's and Dulles' categories," the editorial said.

When Harry Truman was president and when John Foster Dulles was secretary of state, the Soviet Union was a landlocked ground power, but nuclear-armed U.S. military forces dominated everything beyond the Soviet bloc.

Pravda went on to say that U.S. attempts to "prevent changes that are ripe in some countries or other, or in whole regions, to preserve unpopular regimes, and to impose its decrees on freedom-loving peoples are as doomed as attempts by all the predecessors of Carter who laid claims to world leadership."